

COPIES OF REAPEN
ON PAGE 1-2

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Critics fear Gates will stifle agency

By Bill Gertz
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Intelligence experts say the recent nomination of Robert Gates as CIA director and the appointment of former CIA official D. Barry Kelly as the National Security Council's intelligence chief could diminish U.S. support for anti-communist resistance movements.

These critics on Capitol Hill and in the intelligence community say Mr. Gates and Mr. Kelly have reputations as cautious bureaucrats who are likely to oppose high-risk covert operations necessary to support the rebels fighting Marxist regimes in such places as Angola and Nicaragua. That factor, the critics say, coupled with the continued congressional backlash from the Iran-Contra affair, could weaken the administration's commitment to the so-called Reagan Doctrine — the broad, six-year effort to combat Soviet-backed regimes in the Third World.

Mr. Gates, 43, is expected to face tough questions tomorrow on both covert operations and his knowledge of the Iran-Contra episode, when his nomination comes before the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Republican Sens. Orrin Hatch of Utah and Chic Hecht of Nevada, members of the Intelligence panel, have been key promoters of the Reagan Doctrine and have traveled

abroad to visit anti-Marxist rebels. They are expected to seek Mr. Gates' views on covert action programs, congressional aides said.

While one congressional aide said Mr. Gates privately has told some lawmakers he will tighten CIA control over covert operations, Mr. Hecht said the nominee told him otherwise.

"He assured that this was absolutely not the case," Mr. Hecht said yesterday in a telephone interview from his Las Vegas home. "He said he would continue along the lines of [former CIA Director] Bill Casey."

Mr. Hecht also was told by Mr. Gates that he would retain the highly skilled clandestine operators involved in the paramilitary program who were brought into the agency under Mr. Casey.

To further offset conservative fears, Mr. Gates has hinted he is considering National Security Agency

Director Lt. Gen. William Odom, who is popular among conservatives, as his deputy at the agency.

Sen. Gordon Humphrey, New Hampshire Republican and another Senate supporter of the Reagan Doctrine, also has questioned Mr. Gates about his commitment to continuing clandestine paramilitary operations, congressional sources said.

The Gates nomination, as well as the Kelly appointment, has rankled those critics who remember the two men and Frank Carlucci, the new intelligence post, as proteges of Carter administration CIA Director Adm. Stansfield Turner.

"Stansfield Turner's fair-haired boys have become Frank Carlucci's little gray men," one source said.

Adm. Turner created bitter controversy among some intelligence professionals over his efforts to reorganize the agency and remove what he, in his memoirs, described as an influential clique of "old boys" — CIA veterans steeped in covert operations and espionage.

Adm. Turner fired hundreds of clandestine services veterans as part of a CIA policy, initiated in the Ford administration, geared toward high-tech intelligence systems, according to former CIA officials. The dismissals left the agency with only a small operations directorate that was enhanced substantially under the Reagan administration and Mr. Casey.

A transition team report prepared for the incoming Reagan team in 1980 criticized the upper echelon of the CIA, "Carter administration proteges who advanced in grade and position during the past four years because of their willingness to support leftist-oriented perceptions and programs."

While Mr. Casey — the first Rea-

gan CIA director, who retired earlier this month following brain surgery — rejected the transition team recommendation that top Carter-era agency officials be fired, hard-liners remain sharply critical of many of the Turner associates still on hand.

Conservatives are particularly upset about Mr. Carlucci's decision to replace Kenneth de Graffenreid — a staunch Reaganaut, who was NSC intelligence director since 1983 — with Mr. Kelly.

Intelligence sources said Mr. de Graffenreid's ouster was engineered in part by Mr. Gates, who sent Mr. Carlucci a memo proposing that the NSC chief replace Mr. de Graffenreid with a CIA "professional."

CIA sources, however, denied Mr. Gates played a part in Mr. de Graffenreid's departure.

One NSC official, who declined to be named, denied that Mr. Carlucci had reorganized the intelligence section as a result of the NSC's role in the Iran arms affair.

Donald Jameson, a former CIA official, said yesterday he believes the Gates nomination, along with the appointments of Mr. Carlucci and Mr. Kelly, are clear signs that the next two years will be "a period of caution" toward the Reagan Doctrine.

"Hypothetically, the various professional echelons in State or Defense might see that no good word about RENAMO [the Mozambique resistance movement] gets to the top," Mr. Jameson said. "I doubt they would sabotage covert action programs, but they might stifle them."

An intelligence official called Mr. Kelly one of the agency's best operatives, whose "physical courage" in field operations was unsurpassed.

But another senior administration intelligence official described Mr. Kelly as a "naive bureaucrat," whose ambivalent political instincts and loyalty to the agency could hinder President Reagan's activist intelligence policies and reform programs.

The senior official, who declined to be named, said that unlike Mr. de Graffenreid, Mr. Kelly "is not by any stretch of the imagination a Reaganaut" — a conservative Reagan loyalist.

Mr. Jameson said Mr. Kelly rose through the agency's ranks to become director of the science and technology directorate, a department that, according to former officials, often won out in disputes

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with the clandestine services bureau over the allocation of agency resources.

Mr. Kelly, 55, has held several positions inside the CIA's clandestine services directorate, including posts in Nepal and two years as the CIA's Moscow station chief, according to several sources. During his CIA career, Mr. Kelly also took part in the controversial Phoenix Program, sources said.

Phoenix was the code name for a CIA-backed counterterrorist program in Vietnam during the late 1960s aimed at wiping out Viet Cong insurgents.

Mr. Kelly left the agency in 1981 to become president of International Reporting and Information Service (IRIS), an experimental information service set up to sell intelligence reports to large corporations, according to his associates. The service failed to solicit a single client and went bankrupt after several European financiers backed out of the venture after 18 months and some \$15 million in debt, according to former employees and court bankruptcy papers.

Joining Mr. Kelly's intelligence staff is James Collins, a career State Department official with no intelligence experience, State Department sources said. Mr. Collins until recently directed the State Department's operations center. Mary Hanifer, a CIA officer, and Thomas E. McNamara, deputy director of the State Department's political-military affairs bureau and a counterterrorism specialist, will also move over to the NSC intelligence staff.